



**OFFICE OF SENATOR SABINA FLORES PEREZ**

Chairperson

Committee on Environment, Revenue and Taxation, and Procurement

*I MINA'TRENTAI SINGKO NA LIHESLATURAN GUÁHAN*

35<sup>TH</sup> GUAM LEGISLATURE

April 1, 2020

Governor Lourdes A. Leon Guerrero  
513 West Marine Corps Drive  
Ricardo J. Bordallo Complex  
Hagatña, Guam 96910

Dear Governor Leon Guerrero,

I am troubled that the US Navy's plans to seek off-base accommodations for a number of sailors aboard the USS Roosevelt, where now more than 150 personnel have tested positive for COVID-19. Acting Navy Secretary Thomas Modly has stated the Navy is "having to talk to the government" to find such accommodations at local hotels.

A decision of this magnitude, which threatens the health and safety of us all, should not take place without the knowledge and consent of the people of Guam.

Our medical facilities are strained, and we have yet to experience the peak of this outbreak, at which point the island will find itself in an even more compromising situation. I am saddened that we have lost a second victim to the coronavirus, and it is reckless to allow USS Roosevelt personnel to travel about the island at this time.

I urged Rear Admiral John V. Menoni in a March 27th letter to direct USS Roosevelt personnel to quarantine onboard the vessel when medically able and to mobilize the military resources through the Defense Logistics Agency and other means necessary, as is done for humanitarian aid or during wartime. To date, I have not received a response, but according to a March 29th PDN article, your office shared that "It's entirely a U.S. military operation. What has been communicated to us is that they have no intent to tax or utilize our local resources to address the situation."

This complete about-face is shocking and concerning, and highlights either a lack of planning or a lack of transparency by the US Navy, both of which are deeply concerning.

I pray for the speedy and full recovery of all people who contract Covid-19, including our military personnel. However, I am disturbed by the reckless double-standard of potentially placing exposed military personnel in local hotels, when we are already exploring housing our sick manamko in the UOG field house.

Sailors are younger and have better health benefits than the general population. I pray that they can have safer, and speedier recoveries on base. But if sailors are placed in our hotels, we will be exposing lower-wage employees to greater risk, many of whom are older and have limited or no health benefits for themselves and their families. Our military is well-resourced, and able to house these young sailors on base without compounding the problem by exposing vulnerable service workers and the public.

As the number of positive cases climb to over 100 cases, I offer solutions that protect the health and safety for both the crew and our island community:

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- Immediately mobilize military resources through the Defense Logistic Agency and other means necessary for treatment and care.
- Urge the President to utilize the Defense Production Act to efficiently spur the manufacturing of desperately needed medical supplies.
- Urge the US Navy to evacuate non-essential staff from the USS Theodore Roosevelt, in order to decontaminate the ship.
- Recommend to local military leader to begin creating quarantine areas on Naval base, which is 38,000 square acres, that eliminates exposure to the base and civilian community.

In this difficult and trying time, we must unite to do what is best to fight this deadly pandemic. We cannot create double-standards, or an “us vs. them” mentality. We must do what is best for our entire island, military and civilian included. And for that reason, I urge you to oppose this dangerous request, and protect our sailors on base while ensuring our service and hospitality workers, and their families, are also protected.

Sincerely,

*Sabina Flores Perez*

Sabina Flores Perez  
Senator, 35th Guam Legislature

Cc: Rear Admiral John V. Menoni  
Cc: Speaker Tina Muña Barnes, 35<sup>th</sup> Guam Legislature  
Cc: Local media